## Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

## Listing of Claims:

1.      (Currently Amended)  A collaborative computing method comprising the steps of:

providing a collaborative computing system comprising at least one instant messaging client;

initializing said instant message client within a graphical user interface of said collaborative computing system;

specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities;

receiving a search initializing action from said graphical user interface;

responsive to said receiving step, presenting search input fields within said graphical user interface;

receiving input via said input fields that specifies a search pattern;

subject to said at least one search limitation, searching at least one record source for online entities that satisfy said search pattern; and

displaying a search result from said searching step within said graphical user interface.


2.      (Original)  The method of claim 1, wherein said collaborative computing system is a Lotus Sametime (TM) type system.

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3.     (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said search initializing action comprises at most two user inputs.

4.     (Original)  The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

displaying a menu option within said graphical user interface for said instant message client, wherein said menu option is configured to initiate said search view.

5.     (Original)  The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

providing a keyboard combination to initiate said search view, whereby said keyboard combination is a hot-key combination.

6.     (Original)  The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a plurality of user specific search patterns; and

recording said search patterns so that said search patterns can be retrieved at a later time.

7.     (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said record source comprises a first database that is a record source specifying at least one online entity and a second database having a data field, wherein said data field specifies an attribute relating to said online entity that is not specified within said first database, said searching step further comprising the steps of:

establishing a query that includes said data field; and

searching for at least one online entity using said query.

8.     (Original)  The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

specifying a plurality of record sources, each of which specifies at least one online

entity, wherein said searching step further comprises searching said plurality of record sources for online entities that satisfy said search pattern.

9.      (Original)  The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

establishing at least one search preference that is used when performing said searching step, wherein said search result is based at least in part upon said search preference.

10.     (Original)  The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of:

establishing an order in which said record sources are accessed during said searching step.

11.     (Original)  The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

directly executing at least one software-enhanced communication involving said online entity and a user of said graphical user interface using said search result.

12.     (Currently Amended)      A    method   for   establishing   software-enhanced communications comprising the steps of:

specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities;

receiving a user specified search pattern;

subject to said at least one search limitation, searching a point of presence database for online entities having access to a collaboration software application which satisfy said search pattern;

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presenting a list of said resulting online entities;

receiving a selection of at least one of said resulting online entities contained within said list; and

establishing a software-enhanced communication session between said user and said selected online entity.

13.    (Original)  The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

displaying a graphical user interface for an instant messaging component of said collaboration software application, wherein said graphical user interface provides a user selectable search option;

receiving a user selection for said search option; and

responsively presenting search input fields within said graphical user interface, wherein said search pattern is based upon data input into said search input fields.

14.    (Original)    The method of claim 13, wherein said software-enhanced communication session includes a type of communication other than instant messaging.

15.    (Original)    The method of claim 12, wherein said collaboration software application is a Lotus Sametime (TM) type application.

16.    (Currently Amended)  A collaboration software system comprising:

a collaboration server configured to coordinate collaboration operations between a plurality of geographically disperse software components; and

at least one client side collaboration application that includes a search engine, said search engine configured to query said collaboration software system for online entities, wherein said client side collaboration application contains a graphical user interface

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permitting user customization of said search engine, and wherein said search engine is configured to specify at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities.

17.    (Original)    The system of claim 16, wherein said graphical user interface comprises an instant messenger view and a search view.

18.    (Original)  The system of claim 17, wherein said search view is directly initiated from said instant messenger view, and wherein said search view utilizes said search engine.

19.    (Currently Amended)    A ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a ~~machine~~ computer for causing the ~~machine~~ computer to perform the steps of:

providing a collaborative computing system comprising at least one instant messaging client;

initializing said instant message client within a graphical user interface of said collaborative computing system;

specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities;

receiving a search initializing action from said graphical user interface;

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responsive to said receiving step, presenting search input fields within said graphical user interface;

receiving input via said input fields that specifies a search pattern;

subject to said at least one search limitation, searching at least one record source for online entities that satisfy said search pattern; and

displaying a search result from said searching step within said graphical user interface.

20.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said collaborative computing system is a Lotus Sametime (TM) type system.

21.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said search initializing action comprises at most two user inputs.

22.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

displaying a menu option within said graphical user interface for said instant message client, wherein said menu option is configured to initiate said search view.

23.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

providing a keyboard combination to initiate said search view, whereby said keyboard combination is a hot-key combination.

24.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

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establishing a plurality of user specific search patterns; and

recording said search patterns so that said search patterns can be retrieved at a later time.

25.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 19, wherein said record source comprises a first database that is a record source specifying at least one online entity and a second database having a data field, wherein said data field specifies an attribute relating to said online entity that is not specified within said first database, said searching step further comprising the steps of:

establishing a query that includes said data field; and

searching for at least one online entity using said query.

26.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

specifying a plurality of record sources, each of which specifies at least one online entity, wherein said searching step further comprises searching said plurality of record sources for online entities that satisfy said search pattern.

27.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 26, further comprising the step of:

establishing at least one search preference that is used when performing said searching step, wherein said search result is based at least in part upon said search preference.

28.    (Currently Amended)  The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 26, further comprising the step of:

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establishing an order in which said record sources are accessed during said searching step.

29. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable~~ <u>computer-readable</u> storage of claim 19, further comprising the step of:

directly executing at least one software-enhanced communication involving said online entity and a user of said graphical user interface using said search result.

30. (Currently Amended) A ~~machine-readable~~ <u>computer-readable</u> storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a ~~machine~~ <u>computer</u> for causing the ~~machine~~ <u>computer</u> to perform the steps of:

<u>specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities;</u>

receiving a user specified search pattern;

<u>subject to said at least one search limitation,</u> searching a point of presence database for online entities having access to a collaboration software application which satisfy said search pattern;

presenting a list of said resulting online entities;

receiving a selection of at least one of said online entities contained within said list; and

establishing a software-enhanced communication session between said user and said selected online entity.

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31. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 30, further comprising the step of:

displaying a graphical user interface for an instant messaging component of said collaboration software application, wherein said graphical user interface provides a user selectable search option;

receiving a user selection for said search option; and

responsively presenting search input fields within said graphical user interface, wherein said search pattern is based upon data input into said search input fields.

32. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 31, wherein said software-enhanced communication session includes a type of communication other than instant messaging.

33. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine-readable~~ computer-readable storage of claim 30, wherein said collaboration software application is a Lotus Sametime (TM) type application.

34. (Currently Amended) A collaborative computing system comprising:

an instant messaging client;

a graphical user interface configured to grant authorized users access to said instant messaging client, wherein said graphical user interface is further configured to permit said authorized users to conduct a user specific search for online entities; and

means for establishing a software-enhanced communication session between said authorized user and said online entities that result from said user specific search, wherein said means for establishing further comprise means for specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a

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predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities.

35. (Currently Amended) A system for establishing software-enhanced communications comprising:

means for specifying at least one search limitation, said search limitation preventing users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities;

means for receiving a user specified search pattern;

means for searching, subject to said at least one search limitation, a point of presence database for online entities having access to a collaboration software application which satisfy said search pattern;

means for presenting a list of said resulting online entities;

means for receiving a selection of at least one of said online entities contained within said list; and

means for establishing a software-enhanced communication session between said user and said selected online entity.